JOSHUA WILLIAMSON MARCO FODERÀ LEE LOUGHRIDGE

G.I. JOE

image

#18

ENERGON UNIVERSE

CODENAME:

G.I. JOE

[MISSION LOG [03.018.01]

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G.I. JOE WILL RETURN FROM THEIR MISSION TO SAVE DUKE ANY MOMENT...BEFORE I GET A DEBRIEF FROM THEM, I WANTED TO SPEAK TO YOU, FLINT.
WHAT DO YOU KNOW OF THE MAN KNOWN AS ROADBLOCK?
I NEVER SERVED WITH MARVIN F. HINTON.
"WORD IS HE WAS THE BEST HEAVY GUNNER IN THE WORLD.
SSIZZZZZ
"HIS FIREPOWER WAS ALMOST AS DANGEROUS AS HIS TEMPER.
"BUT LAST I HEARD, SIR, HE HUNG UP HIS ARMS AND UNIFORM AND WENT HOME...
"TO LIVE OUT HIS DREAM GIG..."
FOUR MELTS WITH FRIES FOR LUNCH...

BILOXI, MISSISSIPPI.
BON APPETIT!
ALRIGHT, YOU KNOW WHAT TO DO.
NAPKINS ARE ON THAT TABLE OVER THERE.
IF YOU FOLKS NEED ANYTHING AT ALL, DON'T HESITATE TO GIVE ME A HOLLER.

DON'T TALK TO STRANGERS, KIDS!
HEY, MARVIN, YOU MIND LENDING ME A HAND WITH A SHIPMENT?
I GOT YA, MISS SALLY.
YOU NEVER WORK A DAY IF YOU DO WHAT YOU LOVE...
Paris
MARVIN'S MELTS
WELCOME TO MARVIN'S MELTS.
HOW CAN I HELP YOU HAVE A CHEESY DAY?

ACTUALLY, WE BELIEVE WE...
...CAN HELP YOU, MARVIN.
WE ARE TOMAX AND XAMOT PAOLI OF EXTENSIVE ENTERPRISES...
I HOPE YOU UNDERSTAND, WE CAME A LONG WAY TO COME HERE.
TOOK TIME OUT OF OUR BUSY SCHEDULE.
VERY BUSY.
BUT WE APPRECIATE YOU FINALLY AGREEING TO SPEAK WITH US.
WE'RE HUGE FANS.
SO, I'VE HEARD.

WE'VE SENT REPRESENTATIVES TO SPEAK WITH YOU IN THE PAST...
...BUT THEY WERE...
...REBUFFED.
SPRAYYY
KICK!
TZZZZZ
WHAT THEY WERE WAS RUDE.
IT WAS A MISTAKE TO SEND SOMEONE OTHER THAN OURSELVES TO PITCH YOU.
WE PLAN TO GO NATIONAL.
INTERNATIONAL. THAT'S WHERE THE BIG MONEY IS.
AND WITH YOU...
WE WANT YOU TO BE THE FACE OF OUR NEW BRAND OF FOOD TRUCK. RED ROCKETS.
...WE CAN DO THAT.
AND I APPRECIATE WHAT YOU'RE SAYING, BOYS. I DO.
BUT MY DREAM IS RIGHT HERE. IT AIN'T ABOUT GROWING MY BRAND. I JUST COOK TO MAKE PEOPLE HAPPY. IT'S ABOUT BRINGING PEOPLE TOGETHER. I GOT SOME GOALS FOR THE FUTURE, BUT FOR RIGHT NOW...THIS IS IT.
THAT'S SO FASCINATING.
CONSIDERING YOUR PAST...

"YOU WERE A SOLDIER. ONE THAT WAS UNHAPPY WITH THE STATE OF THE WORLD. THE THINGS YOU WERE SEEING. YOU WANTED A CHANGE."
BOOM BOOM BOOM
AND WE BELIEVE WE CAN OFFER YOU THAT CHANGE.
BUT THAT IS NOT ALL WE ARE OFFERING.
WE WANT THE ENERGY YOU BROUGHT TO THE FIELD, TO BE BROUGHT TO OUR BUSINESS.
AND IN EXCHANGE...
WE CAN PAY YOU MORE THAN YOU COULD EVER IMAGINE.
YOU'LL BE ABLE TO OPEN YOUR RESTAURANT. YOU CAN TRAVEL THE WORLD.
WHAT DO YOU SAY?
OF COURSE, WE HAVE A DEAL?

NAH.
EXCUSE ME?
LISTEN, I'M NO DUMMY. I KNOW WHAT YOU REALLY ARE. PEOPLE TALK, BOYS.
YOU USE YOUR RED ROCKET FOOD TRUCKS AS RECRUITING TOOLS FOR YOUR LITTLE CULT.
AND I AIN'T ABOUT THAT.
SO, ENJOY YOUR MEAL... IT'S ON THE HOUSE.
LET'S GO, BROTHER.
THIS FOOD IS BENEATH US ANYWAY.
YOU'RE GOING TO REGRET THIS, MARVIN.
SOONER THAN YOU THINK.
VRRRRRMMM
SOON?
NOW WHAT DID THAT PAIR OF WEIRDOS MEAN BY THAT?

BOSSES SAID MINIMUM CASUALTIES, BOYS.
BUT LET'S RUIN SOME LIVES.
BANG BANG BANG BANG BANG

KRK
WHAT IS WRONG WITH YOU?!
THIS AIN'T A WAR ZONE.
NO ONE TURNS DOWN THE CRIMSON TWINS.
YOUR LITTLE FOOD TRUCK IS...
MARVIN'S MELTS
WHAT THE--?!
THERE ARE FAMILIES HERE!

ARRGHHHHH!
CRRRR
CRASH!
KICK
DAMN.
WHAT A TOTAL WASTE OF TIME.
I SUSPECT HE'LL CHANGE HIS MIND AND COME RUNNING BACK TO US.

WHERE TO NEXT, BROTHER?
I'D LIKE TO GO TO A NICE RESTAURANT SO I CAN GET THE STINK OF THAT PLACE OFF OF ME.
IT REALLY WAS BELOW OUR STANDING, WASN'T IT?
PERHAPS WE TRY TO RECRUIT SOMEONE ELSE TO BE THE FACE OF OUR FOOD TRUCKS...
...PERHAPS THE ONE WITH THE BEACH SHIRTS...

BOOM
CRASH!
MARVIN
ARVIN MELTS
SSSSSSCREEEEE
KRASH!
BROTHER...WHAT HAPPENED...?
THE CHEF...
...HIT US...

DAMN RIGHT, I DID.
YOU CAN @#$% WITH ME.
YOU CAN COME AT ME WITH AS MUCH AS YOU WANT. I CAN TAKE IT.
HURRY, TOMAX.
YOU THINK I'M THE ONE SLOWING US DOWN, XAMOT?
BUT THERE WERE FAMILIES BACK THERE, AND HARDWORKING PEOPLE WHO JUST WANT TO SHARE THEIR LOVE OF FOOD WITH PEOPLE.
WE OUT NUMBER HIM.
INDEED... BUT WHAT IS HE DOING...?

NO ONE MESSES WITH THAT AND GETS TO JUST DRIVE AWAY.
HOW?
THAT GUN MUST WEIGH...
A TON.
BOOM
BOOM

TRSH TRSH TRSH TRSH TRSH
RETURN FIRE!
I BELIEVE HE HAS US BEAT, BROTHER.
BOOM BOOM BOOM
SCCHEEEEE
BOOM BOOM BOOM BOOM
VROOOOM
DRIVE, YOU IMBECILES!
FASTER!

YOU COME BACK HERE IN ANY WAY, SHAPE, OR FORM, AND YOU'LL BE EATING OUT OF A TUBE!
VROOOOOM
SQUEESQUEESQUEESQUEE
THOOM-BOOSH
MARTIN MELTS
I'LL BE DAMNED...

LOOK, MARVIN. YOUR FRIENDS HELPED US.
FRIENDS...?
WHERE THE HELL ARE THE COPS?
WE TOOK CARE OF IT. WE PREFER TO KEEP THINGS... QUIET.
HOW'RE YA DOING, MARVIN? BEEN A LONG TIME.
CAN WE TALK?
SHOOTER... HA...
S#@%.
HOW CAN I HELP YOU HAVE A CHEESY DAY?
"GLAD WE GOT HOME OKAY."

SPRINGFIELD.
COBRA HEADQUARTERS.
"WE GOT LUCKY.
"COBRA COMMANDER SHOULD BE DEAD. INSTEAD, HE RECRUITED HIS ATTACKERS..."
DISGUSTING.
I LIKE THEM. THEY ADD COLOR TO THE PLACE.
BUT THE DREADNOKS ARE ONLY STAYING FOR A MOMENT. JUST LONG ENOUGH SO THEY CAN REST UP, AND MAKE SURE COBRA COMMANDER IS HAPPY.
"DESTRO CAN'T LET THE COMMANDER KNOW WHAT HE DID..."
I'M GLAD WE GOT TO YOU IN TIME, COMMANDER.
I HAD NO IDEA RIPPER PLANNED TO BETRAY YOU LIKE THAT.
BUT I'M SURPRISED YOU MANAGED TO FORM AN ALLIANCE WITH THE PEOPLE WHO WISHED TO KILL YOU.

IT WAS A LEARNING EXPERIENCE, DESTRO. WE KNOW MORE ABOUT G.I. JOE AND ITS SECRETS. I HAVE SEEN WHAT LENGTHS DUKE WILL GO TO GET WHAT HE WANTS.
AND HE HAS SEEN THE SAME FOR ME.
NOW I MAKE REPAIRS TO MY FLESH FOR THE NEXT TIME WE ENCOUNTER THE JOES...
WE MUST FIND THE OTHER ENERGON DEPOSITS SCATTERED AROUND THE WORLD. THIS WAS A MINOR MISHAP. THE MISSION STILL STANDS. THERE ARE OTHER LOCATIONS.
THE FUTURE CONTINUES TO BE DANGEROUS FOR US. FOR THE WORLD.
IT HAS BECOME APPARENT TO ME HOW MUCH WE NEED YOU. YOUR SKILLS IN THE LAB AND THE BATTLEFIELD. YOUR GENIUS IS WHAT MAKES COBRA WORK.
BUT I BELIEVE IT IS TIME YOU REVEAL YOUR ORIGINS TO ME.
IN DUE TIME. ENERGON FIRST. THAT MATTERS MORE THAN YOU OR I. FOR COBRA TO THRIVE, WE MUST CONTROL IT.
ALL OF IT.
I WILL FOLLOW YOUR... EXPERTISE.
YOU ARE MORE THAN AN ALLY, LAIRD DESTRO.
YOU ARE SOMEONE I BELIEVE I CAN CALL FRIEND.
I FEEL THE SAME, BUT I WILL LEAVE YOU TO HEAL, COMMANDER.
PROTOCOL 61. BLUDD. 36 HOURS AGO.
WHERE IS COBRA COMMANDER?
THE COMMANDER HAS TAKEN A LEAVE OF ABSENCE. CALL IT A SABBATICAL. FROM THIS DAY FORWARD...

COBRA IS MINE.
TTTSSSSSS
WHAT'RE YOU TALKING ABOUT, MATE? WHAT MAKES YOU IN CHARGE?
ALL WILL BE REVEALED IN TIME, MAJOR BLUDD. WHILE OUR DEAR COMMANDER IS AWAY, COBRA MUST CONTINUE TO ADVANCE TOWARD THE FUTURE. SPEAKING OF WHICH, I HAVE A MEETING TO ATTEND.
BOSS, DON'T YOU THINK THIS IS A BIT PREMATURE. WE DON'T KNOW IF RIPPER DID THE JOB. LET ME GO AND FIND A BODY FIRST.
FRIEND, INDEED.

STRAIGHT SHOOTERS

DIRECT ALL CORRESPONDENCE TO: GIJOE@SKYBOUND.COM

Who's hungry after this issue?! I have to say, I could really go for one of Marvin's Melts right now haha. Welcome back to another edition of Straight Shooters--I'm your host, editor Ben Abernathy, and joining me at the dinner table, as always, is writer Joshua Williamson!

ROADBLOCK! One of my favorite G.I. Joes is finally in the mix! I wanted to change things up from the last few Night Force issues and create a more grounded setting. And now the Night Force team is built! Except for another member that was teased earlier and will be revealed a few months from now. I doubt anyone has guessed who the last member of Night Force is going to be. Remember, with the Energon Universe, you have to expect the unexpected!

DREADNOK WAR!

The return of Tom Reilly and Jordie Bellaire rocket the quality of this good series into greatness. I'm especially a fan of Bellaire's choice to switch between coloring for realism and coloring for mood. Her choices in the Cobra Commander throne room are jaw dropping. She consistently picks colors I wouldn't expect and yet are perfect for the page.

The story really ups its stakes to complement the great art. The complexity of villainous motives, from Destro's string-pulling to Ripper's pure vengeance, play out exactly like you'd want. I'm also a sucker for stories where the hero and villain have to team up. Williamson plays the characters off of each other as masterfully as Destro.

I'm very excited for the shared Energon Universe to come banging together.

Stephen

Great to hear from you Steve and I'm so glad you are enjoying (enjoyed?) Dreadnok War! We had an absolute blast making it and Joshua, Tom, Jordie and Rus worked insanely hard to deliver one blockbuster event. And maybe I'm biased but I think they CRUSHED the assignment!

Tom and Jordie are killing it! I love watching as the pages come in and see how well they work together to create a vibe for the series.

I'm also a fan of stories when the hero and the villain team up. It's one of my favorite things to write. So, I hope you have fun with the events of Dreadnok War.

As a kid Raptor was one of the toys I had and I almost joy squeaked (at 50 years old), when he pulled up in #8. I'm hoping you bring in more of the characters that weren't mainstream and I have a request: I forgot his name but it was Psy 'Something' he was a Joe with Gypsy origins that had satellites all over his body and his dossier card said he was the 7th son of a 7th son.

Can we get him into the fray? I had a lot of pretend battles with him, Raptor, My Native American Joe with a Wolf (Timber was the wolf's name I think) and more, involved as a kid and it would be a selfish pleasure to see him. Thank you for this series. I'm actively reading Transformers and G.I, Joe emerging universe.

Emil

We've had a lot of fans LOVE Raptor's appearance and have asked for him to return…who knows what the future holds! And I think the character you're thinking of is Crystal Ball…he would be a cool character to bring into the E.U., wouldn't he? Hmmm…

That was Crystal Ball. And yeah…maybe… who knows. I do love bringing in some of the lesser known characters and giving them cool things to do…

And we'll get more Raptor soon. You'll see. Lots of surprises on the way!

Hey Joes!

I thought I'd written this in earlier, but turns out I must've forgotten, alas better now than never! (I'll try my best to structure how I've felt over the past 8 issues but I guarantee this will be messy.)

I was really happy to see Milana back having loved his work on the Cobra miniseries, and he didn't disappoint one bit in making the action sequences pop throughout his contributions to the Baroness/Cover Girl and Major Bludd sequences (particularly with the blinding of his second eye...truly visceral! Not that he'll be needing those eyes anymore with his recent upgrades). Raptor was also a super fun character throughout those issues with a great design, having become acquainted with the character purely from that arc.

The Shooter issue was also a really cool one and done with the paneling provided by Fodera really selling her as a premier marksman! It was nice for me to have a quick turn around on the Night Force team of characters in the Energon

Universe having freshly acquainted myself with them in the recent Silent Issues project (if it's not noticed, I'm a very casual G.I. Joe lore-head jumping into the more expansive cast with this particular launch of comics.)

Dreadnok War is also off to a great start with the first 2 issues being everything I've been waiting for since the conclusion of Williamson' Duke and Cobra miniseries. It's great to see this arc really pull together where everything started with this particular universe as well as how it's been built up by the first arc of the regular title in interesting ways. For my money Williamson is a maverick when it comes to long term plotting based on previous work I've read both in the indie sphere with his creator owned work and at DC, ~2 years in to the Energon Universe and it's safe to say there's no exception to the rule here!

From Nathan

P.S. I always love seeing Williamson on the Allstar Podcast with Sal from Comic Pop too, his enthusiasm for both these line of characters and the other projects he works on is infectious to watch!

Thanks for the letter, Nathan! It was nice to have Andrea back working on G.I. JOE and I'm happy to say you'll be seeing his gorgeous work next month on #19!

Oh, thank you. Those Youtube videos with Sal are my go-to favorite way to promote comics and talk about what I'm working on. I try to show my love for everything I'm working on.

It's awesome to hear that a casual G.I. Joe fan is picking up these issues and enjoying them. That was one of our goals from day one. To make sure that we had a story for the hardcore readers, the casual readers and the new readers. And reading your letter shows we have accomplished that mission.

And yeah, I love to build our lore and mythology and have it inform and tease future stories. I always plan for the long haul and drop clues of what is coming all the time. I like to reward our long-term readers. Thank you for writing us and supporting the Energon Universe!

Hi Josh,

I've been reading G.I. Joe and really loving it so far. This title, along with Transformers and Void Rivals, are definitely among my must read comics! I have been trying to spread the word about these titles to get people I know to read them.

My biggest thoughts regarding Cobra-La and how it influenced various Earth mythologies in this continuity. For example, in my response to Cobra Commander issue 1, I asked whether Cobra-La influenced the myth of Atlantis in the Energon Universe. After reading the respective scenes of the Cobra-La assassin's attempted assassination of Cobra Commander and Destro's autopsy of the assassin, I thought more about how Cobra-La possibly inspired human stories in that reality. In Robert E. Howard's classic Kull stories, Kull battled the Serpent Men who infiltrated human society by shape changing into humans. I thought of this point after seeing the Cobra-La assassin wearing synthetic human skin. Also, H.P. Lovecraft wrote about underground societies. Moreover, there's also James Hilton's novel about Shangri-La. It would be mind-blowing if the Energon Universe's versions of Robert E. Howard, James Hilton, and H.P. Lovecraft had encounters with Cobra-La which inspired their respective stories. Do you have plans to explore how Cobra-La possibly shaped human mythologies and history? That would be a really cool angle for a future Joe story! Until then, keep writing amazing stories!!

Thank you,
Jeff

I'm a huge fan of hidden, underground or mystery societies. I love the idea of the "real map" of the world. It's something I obsess over. One of my favorite novels of all time is Journey to the Center of the Earth. I've read everything you mentioned, and I have lots of ideas in this space. That all being said…we have some wild plans for Cobra-La. We'll be exploring a lot of fascinating pieces of its history and impact on the world. I won't get into spoilers, but I think you'll be very happy. We won't be bringing in actual people to the story, but…you'll see. When we revisit Cobra-La it will be a massive story.

And that's a wrap! THANK YOU to all the fans and retailers for supporting our 6 issue double ship…phew! It was a lot of work but so rewarding…see you in 30 days when Duke finally gets the opportunity to confront a Cybertronian!

-Ben

WHOA. This is the end of our bonkers double shipping! I want to thank everyone who went to their comic book stores to get the issues as they came out twice as fast as normal! It has been a fun experience. I'm thankful to our readers and the people who write to us every month.

Next month is the start of a new arc called "THE HUNT FOR ENERGON" so be ready! Thank you! YO JOE!

-Joshua

ENERGON EXPERIENCE

[illegible]

Bow!

[illegible]

CHARACTER SPOTLIGHT

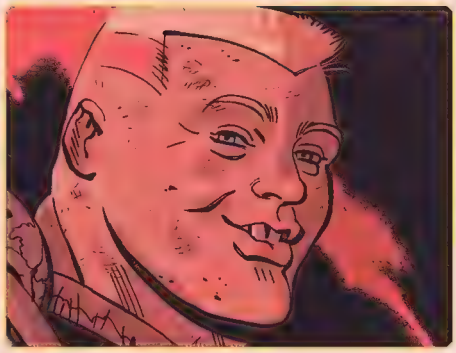
WHO: Hawk

WHERE: A ranking Colonel in the U.S. military and founder of G.I. Joe...or is he?

WHAT: The shocking reveal at the end of Dreadnok War that Zartan is impersonating Colonel Hawk begs the sinister question... just how long has Zartan been leading G.I. Joe? And what's his endgame?

FACE THE MUSIC!

You didn't really think we'd end Dreadnok War without revealing the most infamous Dreadnok of all, did you?! Fans have been clamoring for the arrival of Zartan and now you have it...but what does this mean for G.I. Joe?!



CREATOR SPOTLIGHT

This month, I ask our award-winning letterer on G.I. JOE, Rus Wooton, the most important question of all!

Q: You're in the hot seat now, Rus Wooton, and the question is...who is your favorite Dreadnok?

A: I have to say, the new guy, ROAD PIG.

THE ENERGON UNIVERSE CHECKLIST

- ☐ TRANSFORMERS #28 AVAILABLE 1/14
- ☐ G.I. JOE #17 AVAILABLE 1/14
- ☐ G.I. JOE #18 AVAILABLE 1/28
- ☐ VOID RIVALS #26 AVAILABLE 1/28

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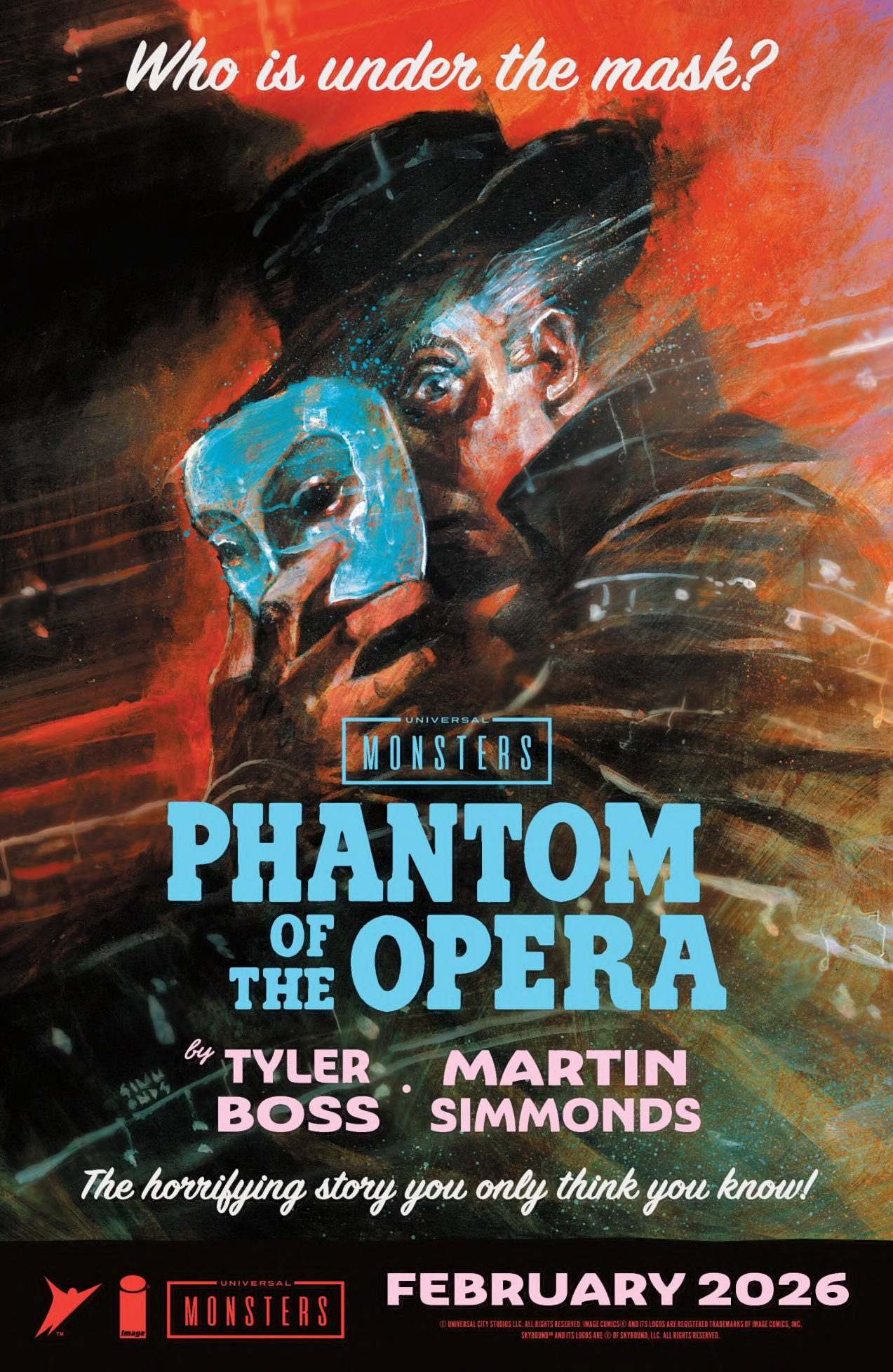

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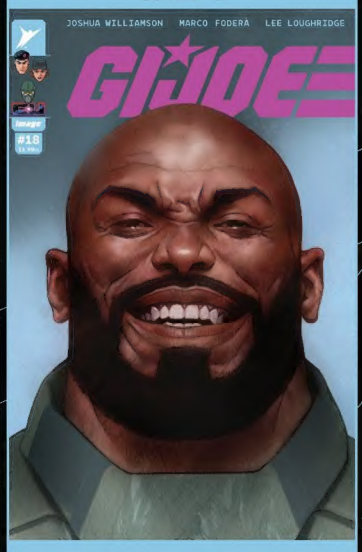

BEN OLIVER

COVER D

LUCAS MEYER
& ADRIANO LUCAS

COVER E

MICHELE RUBINI
& ROMULO FAJARDO JR.

COVER F (FOIL)

PATRICIA MARTÍN

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